REMARKS

Summary of the Office Action

Claim 13 stands rejected under 37 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Jacques (US 6,231,041).

Claims 4-6 and 13-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The Drawings are objected to under 37 C.F.R. § 1.83(a).

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 4-6 and 14-17 contain allowable subject matter.

Summary of the Response to the Office Action

Applicants have amended claims 4-6 and 13-17 to further define the invention. Accordingly, claims 1-17 are presently pending.

Objection to the Drawings

The Drawings are objected to under 37 C.F.R. § 1.83(a). Specifically, the Office Action alleges that the claimed feature of "a separating feeder, contacted on a second side of the paper" of claim 13 is not shown in the Drawings. Accordingly, Applicants have amended claim 13 to recite, in part, "a separating feeder that contacts a lower side of the at least one paper and applies a force thereto in a reverse direction to the transport direction" to overcome the objection to the Drawings under 37 C.F.R. § 1.83(a). Thus, Applicants respectfully assert that the Drawings show every feature recited by amended claim 13, and respectfully request that the objection to the Drawings be withdrawn.

All Claims Comply with 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 4-6 and 13-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, the Office Action alleges that the features recited by the claims lack antecedent basis, as well as the claims being unclear. Accordingly, Applicants have amended the claims to correct the lack of antecedent basis.

Regarding claim 4, as amended, Applicants respectfully assert that the paper feed roll and its paper feed roll side sheet speed detecting part have support in the specification at least on page 8, line 4 and page 12, line 20, respectively. Applicants respectfully assert that the separating member side has support in the specification on page 8, line 18, and the control part which determines a sheet multifeed state is on pages 25-26 of the specification. Regarding claim 13, Applicants respectfully assert that "a paper feeder for feeding the paper, wherein the paper feeder contacts an upper side of at least one paper and applies a force thereto in a transport direction of the paper" and "a separating feeder that contacts a lower side of the at least one paper and applies a force thereto in a reverse direction to the transport direction" have support at least on page 27, lines 1-13 of the specification and in FIG. 5. Regarding claims 14-17, Applicants respectfully assert that the controller for controlling paper feeding as a non-multifeed state or multifeed state has support at least on pages 25-26 of the specification.

Thus, Applicants respectfully assert that claims 4-6 and 13-17, as amended, comply with the requirements under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, and respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, be withdrawn.

All Claims Define Allowable Subject Matter

Claim 13 stands rejected under 37 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Jacques (US 6,231,041). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection as being based upon a reference that neither teaches nor suggests the novel combination of features recited by amended independent claim 13.

Independent claim 13, as amended, recites an image forming apparatus including "a plural-paper detector that detects a plurality of papers transported between the paper feeder and the separating feeder; a paper feeder side paper speed detector that detects a transport speed V1 of the paper in contact with the paper feeder; a separator side paper speed detector that detects a transport speed V2 of the paper in contact with the separating feeder." In contrast to Applicants' claimed invention, Jacques merely discloses first rollers 15 and second rollers 16, and sensors 50 and 51 that detect and locate the speed of the respective sheets 18a and 18b. However, Applicants respectfully assert that Jacques does not teach or suggest a plural-paper detector that detects the transport of plural papers. Accordingly, Jacques is silent with regard to a "plural-paper detector that detects a plurality of papers transported between the paper feeder and the separating feeder" as required by amended independent claim 13, and hence dependent claims 14-17.

For at least the above reasons, Applicants respectfully assert that Jacques fails to teach or suggest the combination of features recited by amended independent claim 13, and hence dependent claims 14-17. Thus, Applicants respectfully assert that this rejection must be withdrawn.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and the timely allowance of the pending claims. Should the Examiner feel that there are any issues outstanding after consideration of the response, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative to expedite prosecution.

If there are any other fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-0310. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 not accounted for above, such an extension is requested and the fee should also be charged to our Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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